DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 301 489 SO 019 434

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TITLE The Value of Retreats in Orthodox Life: A Workshop Handbook.
INSTITUTION Greek Orthodox Archdiocese of North and South America, San Francisco, CA. Diocese of San Francisco.
PUB DATE 15 May 87
NOTE 50p.; Paper prepared for the Greek Orthodox Church Workshop on the Value of Retreats in Orthodox Life (Squaw Valley, CA, May 15-17, 1987).
PUB TYPE Guides - Non-Classroom Use (055) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC02 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Adult Education; Christianity; Church Programs; Program Content; *Program Design; Program Evaluation; *Religious Education; *Workshops
IDENTIFIERS *Greek Orthodox Church; *Retreats

ABSTRACT

This handbook was prepared for the guidance of participants in a workshop designed to help teach Greek Orthodox lay persons the basic elements for creating religious retreats. Part 1 of this document teach Greek Orthodox lay persons the basic elements for creating religious retreats. Part 1 of this document defines the meanings of the terms workshop and retreat and describes this workshop's goals on how to develop successful religious retreats. Part 2 discusses a profile of the Orthodox Christian teacher and the educational possibilities of retreats. Part 3 presents ideas for building a retreat based on tasks that include: (1) the retreat's theme; (2) retreat learning activities; (3) discussion group leadership and activities; and (4) retreat evaluation. Appendices include: (1) "Choir Retreats: Suggested Guidelines" (A. Counelis; J. Counelis); (2) "Empirical Findings from an Orthodox Christian Adult Retreat" (J. Counelis); (3) the Greek Orthodox Diocese of San Francisco (California) Fifth Annual Choir Federation Retreat's schedule and evaluation forms; and (4) three sources for obtaining Orthodox Christian resource materials. (JHP)

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THE GREEK ORTHODOX ARCHDIOCESE OF NORTH AND SOUTH AMERICA

Diocese of San Francisco

THE VALUE OF RETREATS IN ORTHODOX LIFE:

A WORKSHOP HANDBOOK

by

James Steve Counelis

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The Diocesan Assembly,
St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center,
Squaw Valley, California,
May 15-17, 1987.

SO 019 434

San Francisco, California 94127

May 15, 1987

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P R E F A C E

In the Apology, Plato has Socrates say that the unexamined life is not worth living. This was true for Socrates. This is true for the Orthodox Christian. And when we read of doubting Thomas who only believed his physical senses, Christ's reply was: "You believe because you can see me. Happy are those who have not seen and yet believe." [John 20:29-Jerusalem Bible]

Everyone is a doubting Thomas. Everyone is an inquiring Socrates because of natural curiosity. Together these images of Thomas and Socrates describe human nature, namely, that man is made in the image and likeness of God.

A good religious retreat makes it possible for the doubting Thomas in us and the inquiring Socrates in us to come together. Our Orthodox Christian faith is one that stands up to scrutiny from all quarters. The two general purposes of the religious retreat become possible when the Thomas and the Socrates in us seek the Risen Christ. The goal of religious informativeness and the goal of spiritual reward are the results of our continuing pursuit of the Risen Christ.

The invitation of Bishop Anthony of San Francisco to do this workshop on "The Value of Retreats in Orthodox Life" was a privilege and a venture. I hope that the privilege has been rewarded and the venture has been productive. This workshop handbook is but an instructional tool. However, it is also a message on the "value" of retreats in Orthodox life. This message is positive and it is urgent!

The leaders at this Diocesan Assembly come together for doing the Lord's work at home and everywhere else that the Lord sends them. Their work is spiritual and material. The encouragement of the Orthodox Christian religious retreat for the young and the adult is spiritual work. The allocation of material resources for religious retreats is significant. But equally important is the participation of parish leaders in the design and conduct of the religious retreat. I solicit parish leaders to become involved in the encouragement, design and participation in the Orthodox Christian religious retreat.

---JSC

May 15, 1987
The University of San Francisco,
San Francisco, California

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. . .evil is the privation of good and ignorance is the privation of knowledge. . .

St. Maximus the Confessor, Four Centuries of Love, Seventh Century.

THE VALUE OF RETREATS IN ORTHODOX LIFE

by

James Steve Counelis*

Part I: Introduction to Working in a Workshop

What is a Workshop?

The term "workshop" is one that is bandied about by professionals and non-professionals to mean everything from giving a lecture to conducting skills development sessions. The term "workshop" will mean an opportunity to learn the meaning of a religious retreat through developing certain basic program elements of a retreat.

What is a Retreat?

A retreat is a period of religious withdrawal from secular activities for the purposes of personal reflection, meditation, and the self-examination of one's conscience and lifestyle. A retreat is to reaffirm one's Orthodox Christian faith through inquiry and study, meditative prayer and worship. A retreat is a learning opportunity to relax one's body in order to become more attentive to one's soul.

---

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Why a Retreat?

To rest the body physically and to switch the mind from its usual thinking patterns to other thought processes is a universal need. Vacations provide changes of scenery and perhaps different activities. The theater, celebrations and social activities help vary one's everyday work/play fare. Certainly hobbies and sports have their role in providing variety to one's activities, be these physical and/or cerebral in kind. But not one of these important types of "doing" usually has a reflective dimension---an opportunity for the person to learn about the self and the self's relations to others, namely, the individual's relations with spouse, parent, child, colleague, client, friend and stranger. The retreat provides the environment for personal reflection. The retreat has the potential for an Orthodox Christian to experience spiritual reward gained through religious knowledge, once one's personal reflections are given a committed meaning within the context of Christ's teachings.

The retreat for the Orthodox Christian can have a constructive effect in gradually shaping the individual's personal and social life. The retreat helps Orthodox Christians give a meaning to their lives that is religiously informed and spiritually rewarding. The retreat for the Orthodox Christian can become an opportunity to find help in resolving problems of whatever kind. But the help sought needs to be informed by one's Orthodox Christian faith so that the resolution is appropriate and meaningful. To reaffirm one's Orthodox Christian faith to face the

world is on-going. To reaffirm one's Orthodox Christian faith to live irenically, to live with dignity, to live with love is the Orthodox Christian lifestyle.

St. Anthony of the Desert (ca. 250-350 A.D.) wrote the following:

> Just as an artist shows his art by giving beautiful form to the material he used---one wood, another brass, another gold and silver---so too must we show that we are men not by the way our bodies are fashioned but by being truly intelligent in our souls---by the fact that we obey the law of good life, that is a life that is virtuous and acceptable to God. A truly intelligent and God-loving soul knows how all things should be in life, lovingly inclines God to mercy, gives sincere thanks to Him and strives towards Him with all its desire and all its thought.

To fashion the intelligent soul is the goal of every Orthodox Christian. And the retreat provides the reflective opportunity to work on this lifelong project.

What are the Participant's Goals for the Workshop?

This workshop will provide each participant with the opportunity to learn how to create a retreat. There will be five tasks which each participant will do, some of them in cooperation with their workshop colleagues. These tasks will help the workshop participants to answer the following questions:

(1) How to develop a "theme" for a retreat?

(2) How to develop an objective for a retreat that will be a way of learning about the "theme"?

(3) How to design the correct activity which will make it possible to achieve the objective and thus learn about the "theme"?

(4) How to carry out the chosen activity which will make it possible to achieve the objective and thus learn about the "theme"?

(5) How to evaluate the results obtained through doing the chosen activity? Was the objective achieved? Did the participants learn about the "theme" through doing the selected activity?

There will not be enough time during this workshop to discuss the basic planning ideas that go into a whole retreat. However, there are two documents in the appendix of this workshop handbook which will make suggestions for the overall retreat. The first document is the Diocese of San Francisco Choir Federation's "Choir Retreats: Suggested Guidelines." [Appendix A] In this document, there are many practical suggestions for organizing and executing the plans for retreats. The second document is titled "Empirical Findings on an Orthodox Christian Adult Religious Retreat." [Appendix B] This document provides scientific information on what makes a retreat effective. This scientific information was developed by this writer through a systematic study of the Choir Federation's 1986 retreat.

To learn how a religious retreat is constructed and to create some educational elements for such a retreat will provide the workshop participants with an insight into the retreat as a learning process rather than their regarding a retreat as something done to them and others. Also the participants will develop some criteria for evaluating the retreats in which they participate. The goal for this workshop is for the workshop participant to understand and experience the role of retreat master (or

theme specialist) as teacher and to understand and experience the role of the retreat participant. To achieve this goal in a two and one-half hour period will be difficult, though not impossible. Let's give it a try!

Part II: Preliminary Background for Building a Retreat

Who is the Orthodox Christian Teacher?

The Orthodox Christian teacher is potentially everyone who is committed, regardless of age and social status. The teaching ministry begins with baptism. To quote the Orthodox Church's baptismal hymn that is from Paul's Galatian letter, "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ." [Galatians 3:27-28]

To be committed is not enough for Orthodox Christians. We read in James' epistle "For as the body without spirit is dead, so faith without works is dead also." [James 2:26] Therefore, committed Orthodox Christians live their whole faith responsibly through good works because of the Christ who clothed them at baptism. Importantly, Orthodox Christian teachers know that their educational work is James' "good works." The role of every committed Orthodox Christian, clergy or layman, is to help those in need. Whether one is a spouse, parent, child, colleague, friend, public official, fellow worker, priest, bishop or

stranger, all Orthodox Christians are potential teachers who learn and teach through their individual roles and biographies.

The definition of the Church is given in I Peter 2:9-10. It reads: "You are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a consecrated nation, a people set apart to sing the praises of God who call you out of the darkness into his wonderful light." Through his committed Christians as a group, it is quite significant that Paul defined for the Church at Corinth what we might call today a diversified ministry. He wrote:

> Now you are Christ's body, and individually part of it. And God has placed people in the church, first as apostles, second as inspired preachers, third as teachers, then wonderworkers; then come the ability to cure the sick, helpfulness, administration, ecstatic speaking. Is everyone an apostle? Is everyone an inspired preacher? Is everyone a teacher? Is everyone a wonderworker? Is everyone able to cure the sick? Can everyone speak ecstatically? Can everyone explain what it means? But you must cultivate the higher endowments. [I Corinthians 10:27-31. Cf. Romans 12:6-21 and I Corinthians 12:4-11]

These higher endowments are faith, hope and love, the greatest of these being love.

The Priesthoods of the Clergy and the Laity cooperatively serve others as teachers of the body, mind and the spirit. It is pertinent to remember that the Church's baptismal hymn wherein Paul writes about the Royal Priesthoods of the Clergy and the Laity. He says that ethnic, social and genderal differences among committed Orthodox Christians---the Church---vanish through baptism---that singular source from which the whole of the Church's teaching ministry arises. [Galatians 3:27-28]

What are the Goals of the Orthodox Christian Teacher?

Read the Great Commission which the Risen Christ gave unto His disciples before His Ascension:

> All power is given unto me in heaven and earth. Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit: Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commended you: and Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen. [Matthew 28:18-20. Cf. Mark 16:15-18]

This Great Commission is the envelop for each and every goal which all committed Orthodox Christians set for themselves. The evangelion or the "Good News" is eternal life in Christ who trampled death! To help any one in their immediate needs is the way to bring a person of any nation to Christ! This is done through one's vocation, through one's personal relationship with another, through one's generosity of spirit, through one's demeanor, words and actions.

How does the Orthodox Christian Teacher Teach?

On this topic, Paul wrote the following to his Corinthian church:

> If I speak in the languages of men and even of angels, but have no love, I am only a noisy gong or a clashing cymbal. If I am inspired to preach and know all the secret truths and possess all knowledge, and if I have such perfect faith that I can move mountains, but have no love, I am nothing. Even if I give away everything I own, and give myself up, but do it in pride, not love, it does me no good. Love is patient and kind. Love is not envious nor boastful. It does not put on airs. It is not rude. It does not insist on its rights. It does not become angry. It is not resentful. It is not happy over injustice, it is only happy with truth. It will bear anything, believe anything, hope for anything,

> endure anything. Love will never die out. . .So faith, hope and love endure. These are the great three, and the greatest of them is love. [I Corinthians 13:1-8, 13]

Regardless of social status, vocation, gender and/or age, every Orthodox Christian teaches through personal demeanor, words and deeds. The starting point is always one's baptism and one's immediate commitment to the Great Commission. The motivating role of love must be underscored, for without it all teaching spiritually comes to naught. The Orthodox Christian teacher is ever sensitive to the modeling function of teachers. Additionally, student motivation (partially derived through a teacher's high respect, humane concern and care for his or her students and their needs) is well understood as the psychological reflection of Paul's notion of Christian love. All Orthodox Christians strive to teach through personal modeling and Christian love.

What are the Educational Possibilities of the Retreat?

Being made in the image and likeness of God, each person uses his or her intellect, body and will as a unity to fashion what St. Anthony of the Desert called "the intelligent soul." The retreat is a short term educational institution---the Church writ small---within which each retreatant has the opportunity to continue to grow religiously (cognitively) and spiritually (affectively). For this opportunity to occur, the general purposes of every retreat must be known. These are: (1) to become religiously informed; (2) to desire and hopefully experience a sense of spiritual reward. As St. Anthony wrote, the goal of the indi-

vidual person is to fashion an "intelligent soul." This idea of St. Anthony is best known by its Greek name, morphé, that is character formation. Hence, the best result a retreatant can hope for is to achieve by desire and will a change of mind and behavior which is long lasting.

The retreat is one educational institution within the Church that encourages the Orthodox Christian process of character formation. Living peacefully everyday in Pentecost is a continuing human need. Aspiring to be with God in his many mansions is inherently human. To merge a peaceful life with this lively aspiration is the great challenge of being an Orthodox Christian.

Part III: Tasks in Building Teaching Elements for a Religious Retreat

The following five tasks are an opportunity for each workshop participant to become a retreat designer. Each workshop participant with pencil and this workbook in hand will design several basic elements that go into the educational portion of the religious retreat. Each retreat designer will be able to imagine the specific group for whom he or she is developing these retreat elements. Also, there will be several opportunities for the workshop participants to get together into smaller groups. Let's get on to the first task.

Task No. 1: The Retreat Theme

Directions:

The first task is for each workshop participant to develop a theme for a retreat. Before developing such a theme, the retreat designer must know who are going to be the retreat participants. This is necessary because the theme must be a general topic that would be within range of interests of the retreat participants. Below, there is a set of characteristics about the retreat participants as a group. To complete the first part of this task, please check the boxes below, as a retreat designer who is developing a retreat for a specific group.

Characteristics of Retreat Participants as a Group

1. Gender of Retreat Group:

   Male: ____.

   Female: ____.

   Mixed: ____.

2. Age Range of Retreat Group:

   12-14 Years: ____.

   15-18 Years: ____.

   18-24 Years: ____.

   25-65 Years: ____.

   Senior Years: ____.

3. Is this a common interest group? Examples: doctors, businessmen, athletes, parents of drug addicts.

   No: ____

   Yes: _____.

   What common interest? _____.

Creating a Retreat Theme

Directions:

A retreat theme is a very general topic that should appeal to the interests of the group of people for whom you are designing a retreat. There is no magic in determining what a retreat theme should be. However the theme should be related to whether the group is one with a common interest, whether the group will be mixed genderally or not, and to the age range of the retreat group.

One set of theme sources is related to the church calendar: (1) feasts and fasts of the Christ events, the Virgin Mary and the saints; (2) certain holiday seasons; (3) topics in church history, theology and practical ethical concerns.

Another set of theme sources arises from questions of public interest and significance which affect the social, economic, political, public health and moral life of the parish, the larger community, state and nation.

Regardless of theme, the first general goal of any retreat is for the retreat participants to become religiously informed about the topic within the retreat theme. This means that the facts and the Orthodox Christian viewpoint on the theme topic are pursued.

The second general goal of any retreat is that the retreat participants have the opportunity to experience a sense of spiritual reward. This is made possible by the way a theme topic is treated.

Given your choice of retreat group for whom you are developing this retreat, write out below several different but general retreat themes based on the theme sources given above.

Task No. 2: The Retreat Theme's Instructional Objective

Directions:

The retreat theme is always a very general topic. But in order that the theme is learned and understood, a specific topic under that theme needs to become the instructional objective. Hence, if the retreat theme is "Saints and Martyrs," an instructional objective could be to learn about the life of St. Stephen the First Martyr in Acts 6:1 - 8:1. Through this one example of a saint, the retreat participants can become religiously informed about "sainthood" and "martyrdom" within the Orthodox Church.

The workshop participants are to select one of their themes which they have written down for Task No. 1 above. Remembering the retreat group for whom they are designing a retreat, write this retreat theme down and select a specific topic and write it directly under the theme. If the participants have the time, they should write out topics for the other themes which they had written down for Task No. 1.

Task No. 3: The Appropriate Learning Activity

Directions:

How does one select the appropriate activity for learning a particular topic of a retreat theme? This is not an easy question to answer; but there appear to be several principles that can be followed.

Principle No. 1: Determine what is specifically to be learned by the retreat participants.

Principle No. 2: Determine what sources of information would be needed to acquire the appropriate knowledge and/or skills.

Principle No. 3: Determine the simplest method for acquiring the knowledge and skills sought.

Principle No. 4: To facilitate learning, use as many of the human senses possible during the retreat, namely, observing, listening, speaking, reading, writing, smelling, tasting, touching and acting out psychomotor skills where appropriate.

Review the following example. The theme is "Prayer and Praying." The theme topic is to learn to compose our own prayers for any occasion. Using the Lord's Prayer as a model, the retreat group would first study this masterful prayer in small discussion circles, attempting to understand the prayer's contents. [Matthew 6:9-13; Cf. Luke 11:2-4] Secondly, the retreat group would attempt to determine the attitude of the person praying from the text of the Lord's Prayer. Thirdly, the members of the retreat group would write their own prayers. Fourthly, the retreat group would pray together, each retreatant reciting his or her own prayers at the end of group sessions, compline, vespers or a Divine Liturgy. In this example, there are opportunities for the two general retreat goals to be achieved.

The workshop participants are to take one of their own themes with its specific topic, and follow the four principles given above. They are to select the learning activity for the retreat participants which is most appropriate for learning the specific theme topic. Remember the type of retreat group selected in Task No. 1. Write in the space below and on the back of this page.

Task No. 4: Making Reading and Discussion Groups Work

Directions:

One of the most difficult methods for group learning is the reading and discussion group. The method appears deceptively easy. But most novice group leaders kill the opportunity for the individuals to learn in the group. A few principles are helpful for discussion group leaders.

(1) The discussion leader has the responsibility to guide the discussion along rather than being a directive teacher to the group.

(2) The discussion leader serves as a facilitator of discussion and a monitor who controls group members who tend to monopolize the discussion.

(3) The discussion leader serves to present the opening question and the continuing questions when discussion appears to lag.

(4) The discussion leader encourages everyone to participate in the discussion. The discussion leader might even call on some people if they are too reticent. The group leader must remind everyone in the group that they are all learners together.

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In this task, the workshop participants will divide up into small discussion groups. Each group will select their own group leader and someone who will take brief notes. The participants will reassemble at an assigned time. There will be a comparison of the discussion notes. Also, the workshop leader will attempt to answer questions and discuss any aspect of David's 23d Psalm.

Below is a reading text with some thought questions given in parallel column with the text. There is blank space in this workshop handbook provided for the workshop participants to write in their thoughts with reference to suggested questions. Also use the back of the pages for writing. The text for this reading/discussion session is King David's 23d Psalm.

Below, this writer has delineated the retreat theme, its topic, the learning activity and the text. Of course, the workshop participants are adult church leaders.

A Reading/Discussion Guide for King David's 23d Psalm

Retreat Theme: God's Providence.

Retreat Theme Topic: King David's understanding of God and His Providence.

Learning Activity: Reading/Discussion Groups.

Biblical Text: Psalm 23 [King James Version].

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1. The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.	To whom is David speaking?
2. He maketh me to lie down in green pastures; he leadeth me by the still waters.	What is the importance of David's testimony here?
3. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.	What does David mean by this passage?
4. Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I fear no evil. Thy rod and Thy staff comfort me.	To whom is David speaking in this passage?

5.	Thou preparest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies; Thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over.	What is the importance of the passage for understanding David's notion of God's Providence?
6.	Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.	Is David sure of God's Providence for him?

What is your personal opinion of David's view of God and His Providence for Him? Is he overly optimistic? Is he pessimistic at all?

Do you hold the same perception of Christ our Risen Lord and Redeemer?

Is this psalm a spiritual document for you? What is its spiritual value for you? Do you empathize with King David?

Task No. 5: Retreat Evaluation

Directions:

The evaluation of a religious retreat is an important process. Such evaluations are constructive "feedback" to those who conduct the retreat. The idea of an evaluation is to improve the religious retreat so that it can become more effective each time the retreat designers conduct the next retreat. Also, evaluations make the retreat designer accountable for the quality of his or her enterprise. The retreat designer must bring a "full head" of knowledge and not tired sermons to the retreat! The retreat designer must continue to develop human relations skills in order to make the religious retreat both religiously informative and spiritually rewarding.

Evaluations of retreats are made by asking the retreat participants about the experiences they had during the retreat. Though informal interviews are possible, they are not practical. Hence, the other alternative is to ask the participants to fill in a survey form immediately after the retreat's conclusion.

Questions on the survey should cover the following: (1) the clarity of purpose(s); (2) quality of program; (3) quality of total program planning; (3) quality of the educational processes used; (4) quality of written materials provided; (5) quality of the retreat leader's preparation and presentation---whether he/she is "winging it"; (6) whether the stated goals for the retreat were achieved; (7) adequacy of time for given parts of the retreat; (8) the availability and adequacy of the amount of time devoted to meditation; (9) the availability of a priest for confessions and religious services; (10) the adequacy of the physical facilities and food service.

Generally, there are three types of evaluational questions that can be used. These are: (1) the open ended question through which the respondent addresses the topic of the question; (2) the multiple choice question through which the respondent chooses the answer which is "best"; (3) the statement/continuum response question through which the respondent determines the "degree" to which a given statement reflects his/her perception, opinion or agreement.

Review the following three examples:

Example No. 1: The open ended essay question.

"What did you learn about the 23d Psalm which you found to be helpful?"

Example No. 2: The multiple choice question.

Complete the following sentence:

"I found the 23d Psalm to be _____."

_____ A. an excellent meditation for me.

_____ B. a beautiful poem with ideas that match my own.

_____ C. a comforting spiritual message.

_____ D. All of the above.

_____ E. None of the above.

Example No. 3: the statement/continuum response question.

Directions:

Read the following statement. Circle the number which reflects your "degree" of agreement with the statement. The number "5" represents high agreement and the number "1" represents low agreement.

Statement:

"King David's 23d Psalm is a meditative poem which I find comforting."

5	4	3	2	1
High Agreement with Statement				Low Agreement with Statement

---

In Appendix C, there are two examples of evaluation forms, one for adults and one for young people. These were designed by this writer for the Choir Federation's 1987 retreat. The program schedule for this retreat is enclosed in order that the contents of the adult evaluation form are understood. The young people's program was not printed and distributed. The eval-

uation form for the young people was done in consultation with the young people's retreat director.

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On this page, the workshop participants should try their hand in writing at least one of each type of evaluation question. Through these three types of questions, evaluative answers on all aspects of the religious retreat are possible.

Part IV: Some Concluding Thoughts

Hopefully, this excursion into the nature of the religious retreat has been useful. Though there are forms of religious retreats other than the one described here, this writer believes that this form of religious retreat meets the character and needs of Orthodox Christians in the United States.

The purpose and use of the five tasks has been to provide an opportunity for the workshop participants to understand what it takes to put on a first class religious retreat. There is a considerable amount of homework that must go into the planning and execution of the program. Also, the retreatants must take something away with them which will remind them of their experiences. Hence, this is the reason why this writer always prepares some type of activity handbook. The retreatants can write in their own words what they were thinking during the time when the retreat program was in progress. Further, most people are not experienced note-takers; and that is why this writer recommends that lecturers should have prepared copies of their text (or a précis) for distribution. Thus when the retreatants have the lecture text in their hands and are reading along with the lecturer, both human senses of hearing and seeing (reading) are activated at the same time, providing reinforcement learning of the ideas presented by the lecturer. Also the text can be reread at home with considerable more attention and insight.

The interests of retreatants are always stimulated by having all of their senses put to use. Too, there is need for quiet time to be alone, or to be with other retreatants in quiet conversation, or to be in conference with a spiritual advisor. The use of the quiet time to be alone for meditation and prayer in the outdoors or in a chapel should never be undervalued. Such time is probably the most important resource which the religious retreat has to offer. The retreatants and the retreat designers should respect this precious resource and not squander it. Both the retreatant and the retreat designer must respect each other in their respective roles. Nonetheless, it is the retreatant who must decide how to use his or her time during the retreat.

The Orthodox Christian religious retreat is the Church writ small. It is the Eucharistic Community coming together to pray with each other and to pray for each other. It is the Eucharistic Community coming together for the sanctity and grace of Holy Communion.

This writer anticipates (hopefully?) that the workshop participants will take this handbook home with them and bring the ideas here presented into use. Ideas are not abstract when put to use. And as leaders in your parishes in this wonderful Diocese of San Francisco, you and your parish priest have a collateral and cooperative responsibility for the spiritual life of your parish. To leave it solely to your parish priest is to devalue the priesthood you were conferred with at Holy Baptism.

Remember the quotation from I Peter that you are a Royal Priesthood. Live up to it with service in and for the spiritual life as well as service for the material life of the Church.

+

What God is as great as our God?
Thou art the Fod, Who does wonders!

---Psalm 76:13-14

+

In the face of a palpable hunger among an intelligent and literate laity, a heightened desire for a firm spiritual grounding, we need very much to renew our commitment to theologize, as St. Gregory Nazianzos expressed it, in the manner of the Apostles rather than of Aristotle --- "alieutikos, ouk Aristotelikos." Implicit in that commitment is the duty to render the tradition accessible to the ecclesia in accents that are current and intelligible to it.

---Leonidas C. Contos,
2001: The Church in Crisis,
1982.

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As in lawful marriage, the pleasure of procreation cannot strictly be called a divine gift of God, for it is carnal and a gift of nature and not of grace, though nature was created by God; so knowledge derived from profane education, though it be well used, is yet a gift of nature and not of grace, God giving it to all without exception by means of nature and not grace, it being something that can be developed by practice.

---St. Gregory Palamas,
Triad I,
Fourteenth Century

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A:

Choir Retreats: Suggested Guidelines

by

Anna M. Counelis & James Steve Counelis

THE DIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Choirs
of the Western States---West

CHOIR RETREATS: SUGGESTED GUIDELINES

by

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and

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The Winter 1986 Federation Meeting,
The Greek Orthodox Church of the Nativity,
1110 Dickson Drive,
Ignacio, California 94947,

Saturday,
January 25, 1986.

IGNACIO, CALIFORNIA 94947

January 25, 1986

DIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

The Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Choirs
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Choir Retreats: Suggested Guidelines

These suggested guidelines are presented in outline form. The content and processes for designing and living these choir retreats (leading to spiritual renewal of the person and the group) require careful thought, planning and sensitive execution. Additionally, there are many principles in these suggested guidelines which are applicable to the programming of workshops.

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I. Definition:

A choir retreat is a period of religious withdrawal from secular activities for the purpose of meditation, the examination of one's conscience, and the reaffirmation of one's faith through study and church music.

II. Purposes:

The purposes of a choir retreat are to provide the opportunity for solitude, tranquility, and introspection about one's personal life within his/her family and community. Through worship and prayer, reflection upon the religious and ethical principles of Orthodox Christianity, Bible and liturgy study, and the music of the Church, a person returns refreshed and rededicated to a genuine Christian life style.

III. Planning the Choir Retreat Program:

A. Time of Year:

Retreats can be planned for any time of the year. The use of a saint's feastday and the major Lenten periods of the Church are especially meaningful. Christmas, the Great Lent, the Feast of the Apostles, and the Dormition of the Virgin Mary are these major Lenten periods.

B. Choir Retreat's Programmatic Theme:

The choir retreat program should be centered around a specific theme. Thematic programming provides the widest creative latitude for organizing the content for all aspects of the choir retreat, be that content religious, historical, biblical, liturgical or musical.

C. Spiritual Development of Retreat Participants:

The Orthodox Church has a wide variety of worship and prayer services through which the personal and corporate development of spirituality are enhanced. Especially, the Divine Liturgy and the confessional are appropriate sacraments which should be held.

Time periods for personal reflection, self-examination and prayerful meditation need to be set aside.

Time periods for thematic lectures, small discussion groups, and the study of biblical, liturgical or other readings need to be structured.

Time periods for the study of the religious content of the retreat's liturgical and musical program need to be set aside.

D. Musical Development of Retreat Participants:

Practice periods for the retreat group's choral development using selected liturgical music of the choir retreat need to be the significant bases for the retreat group's development of musical skills.

Practice periods for the cultivation of choral singing skills among the choir retreat participants need to be provided.

A reasonable variety of music appropriate to the retreat's theme would be useful, given the time constraints of the retreat.

E. Recreation for Retreat Participants:

Mild physical recreation periods for catch, golf driving, photography, hiking, croquet, boating, and fishing are appropriate. Also recreational singing, instrument playing, and board games are useful alternatives, especially when the weather is not cooperative.

F. Evaluation of the Retreat by Participants:

An evaluation of the whole choir retreat needs to be done. A brief questionnaire should be developed; and a half-hour group session which has the purpose of eliciting constructive suggestions for the next retreat would be useful.

IV. Choir Retreat Leadership:

The leaders for the choir retreat should be the following: (1) The Choir Retreat Chair for Arrangements and Administration; (2) Musical Director; (3) Organist; (4) Priest/Retreat Master; (5) Theme Specialist; (6) Music Clinician.

Federation policy should be made as to which costs for choir retreat personnel are to be borne by the Federation.

VI. Arrangements and Administration of the Choir Retreat:

A suitable site with adequate room arrangements and reasonable accommodations for housing and food need to be selected.

All study materials and music must be provided.

Adequate lead time is necessary for booking accommodations, making arrangements for the choir retreat personnel, program planning, announcement preparation and the publicity for the choir retreat, preparation and delivery of study materials, and the development of a pre-paid reservation system.

The announcement for the choir retreat should contain the following elements: (1) the full name, address, and telephone of the retreat site; (2) the inclusive dates and times of the retreat; (3) the theme, a short program listing, and the guest specialists of the retreat; (4) a "cut-off" reservation form; (5) the total cost of the retreat; (6) the deadline date for reservations and their payment; (7) the full name, address and telephone number of the retreat chair to whom the reservation forms are to be sent.

The "cut-off" reservation form should contain the following elements: (1) full name of the choir retreat participant; (2) full address of the choir retreat participant; (3) home telephone number; (4) the parish church; (5) the choir retreat participant's vocal part in choral

singing; (6) the full name, address and telephone of the choir retreat chair to whom the reservation form is to be sent.

The choir retreat chair should seek the Federation membership list for mailing purposes.

Publicity for the choir retreat should be sought through local newspapers, parish bulletins and the Diocesan Voice. The Federation's appeal should be directed to people with musical interests who may wish to widen their religious and musical experiences, hopefully, recruiting new choir members and re-attracting former members.

VII. Some Educational Principles:

There should be available at the retreat site reference and background material on the choir retreat's theme.

There should be available at the retreat site meditational reading material. Extra Bibles should be available.

The choir retreat participants should be encouraged to bring their own Bibles and a small personal icon for their own meditation in their room or elsewhere.

The thematic specialist should have some study materials for distribution to the choir retreat participants. Also, the thematic specialist should be encouraged to provide a brief bibliography of readily available books and the sources for procuring these books.

The priest/retreat master should be encouraged to have meditational materials for distribution to the choir retreat participants. Also the priest/retreat master should be encouraged to provide a short bibliography of Orthodox Christian meditational materials that are readily available and the sources for procuring these meditational materials.

The discussion groups should be from 6 to 10 persons in size for greater individual participation. Discussions should be guided by the discussion leader so as not to ramble topically as well as to avoid some one person dominating the discussion group.

Each lecture session should be about 30-45 minutes with a question/answer session of about 30 minutes duration. The lecturers should be informed of the time format in advance so that they can plan for it.

APPENDIX B:

Empirical Findings from an Orthodox Christian Adult Religious Retreat

by

James Steve Counelis

EMPIRICAL FINDINGS FROM AN ORTHODOX CHRISTIAN ADULT RETREAT

by

James Steve Counelis

Source:

James Steve Counelis, The Adult Religious Retreat and the Higher Learning: Theory, Design and Evaluation (San Francisco: The University of San Francisco/School of Education, 1986).

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Abbreviated Findings:

(1) The religious retreat has two purposes or goals: (a) to religiously inform the retreatant; (b) to induce a sense of "spiritual reward." Both purposes or goals are achieved through some religiously motivated educational opportunity which joins the cognitive with the affective. The two retreat goals are directly related and highly correlated.

(2) Capitalizing upon the religious orientation of the retreatants, the motivation of the retreatants is strongly related to their interest in the retreat topics. Both retreat goals of religious informativeness and a personal sense of spiritual reward are directly related to the retreatants' interest and they are significantly correlated.

(3) The retreat's format effectiveness is directly related and significantly correlated with the retreatants' achievement of the retreat goals.

(4) The effectiveness of the retreat format is directly related and highly correlated to the following instructional variables: (a) topical interest of the retreatants; (b) the quality of instruction; (c) the quality of materials; (d) the degree of group participation.

(5) The following instructional variables are directly related and highly correlated with each other: (a) the quality

of instruction; (b) the quality of materials; (c) the degree of group participation.

(6) The Orthodox Christian model of religious education is Pentecost wherein all languages of the world are used to bring the "Good News." When done in the congregation's mother tongue, religious services are effective inductors and integrators of the retreat's two goals---to be religiously informed and to be spiritually rewarded.

(7) To accomplish the two goals of the retreat---to be religiously informed and to be spiritually rewarded---adequate time should be made available for the retreatants' solitude, personal prayer, and the opportunity for the Holy Sacraments of Penance, Holy Unction, and Holy Eucharist.

(8) The priest who has the responsibility of the retreat master has a special role of great religious import and spiritual effect. The diocesan bishop should assign only the most able pastorally-oriented priests to do the pastoral work of the retreat. His spiritual work through the sacraments of Penance, Holy Unction and Holy Eucharist are of paramount importance, along with accessibility for casual conversation and advising sessions.

APPENDIX C:

Fifth Annual Choir Federation Retreat

Schedule

Retreat Evaluation Form

Youth Choir Evaluation Form

THE GREEK ORTHODOX DIOCESE OF SAN FRANCISCO

Federation of Greek Orthodox Church Choirs
of the Western States---West

He fixed the heavens from the beginning
and placed the earth upon the waters.
Anchor the Church in rock for me, O Christ,
For there is no one except You Who is holy,
O Lover of Man.

---Sunday Matins,
St. John Damascene,
Ode 3, Hirmos,
Fourth Plagal Mode.

FIFTH ANNUAL CHOIR FEDERATION RETREAT

St. Nicholas Ranch and Retreat Center
Squaw Valley, California

February 27 - March 1, 1987

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Schedule

FRIDAY:

8:00 P.M.	Arrival & "Light Supper."
9:30 P.M.	Fireside Focus, Program Hostess: Mrs. Dimmie Efstathiou.

SATURDAY:

7:00 A.M.	Wake-up!
7:30-8:25	Saturday of Souls, The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, St. Nicholas Chapel, Epistle: Rom. 14:19-26, or, Gal. 5:22-26 - 6:1-2 Gospel: Matt. 11:27-30, The Reverend James S. Gordon, Celebrant. [Attendance is optional.]
8:30	Breakfast.

9:00-9:15	Introductory Session: Welcome, Mrs. Anna M. Counelis, Chair, 1987 Choir Federation Retreat Committee. Opening Remarks, The Reverend James S. Gordon, Retreat Master.
9:15-11:15	First Retreat Theme: "Holy Wednesday and Holy Unction: The Healing of Body and Spirit," St. Nicholas Chapel, The Reverend James S. Gordon, Celebrant. [Please bring your Papadeas Holy Week-Easter Service Book to this session.]
11:15-11:30	Break!
11:30-1:00 P.M.	Music Workshop. Ms. Kathy Trapp, Music Director.
1:00-1:30	Lunch!
1:30-3:30	Meditation and Quiet Time.* Optional Session: A half hour guidance session on personal meditation by Fr. Gordon.
3:30-5:30	Second Retreat Theme: "The Promise of Easter Morn," James Steve Counelis. [Please bring your Bible and the Papadeas Holy Week-Easter Service Book to this session.]
5:30-6:00	Free Time!*
6:00-7:00	Vespers, St. Nicholas Chapel, The Reverend James S. Gordon, Celebrant.
7:00-8:15	Dinner.
8:15-9:00	Free Time!*
9:00 ---> ?	Musical Surprise & Improvisation, Program Hostess: Mrs. Dimmie Efstathiou.

SUNDAY:

8:00 A.M.	Wake-up!
9:00	Cheese Fare Sunday, The Divine Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom, St. Nicholas Chapel, Epistle: Rom. 13:11-14:4, Gospel: Matt. 6:14-21, The Reverend James S. Gordon, Celebrant.
11:00-11:45	Brunch.
11:45	Retreat Evaluation.
12:00 Noon	Farewell! A Safe Trip Home!

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The 1987 Choir Federation Retreat Committee

Mrs. Anna M. Counelis, Chair,
Mrs. Tina Manus, Federation President,
Mrs. Dimmie Efstathiou,
Mr. John Efstathiou.

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The 1986-1987 Choir Federation Officers

Mrs. Tina Manus, President,
Dr. John Kepros, Vice President,
Mrs. Mary Futris, Secretary.

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*Fr. Gordon, our Retreat Master, will be pleased to schedule confessions and counseling time during these periods or at other mutually convenient times.

FIFTH ANNUAL CHOIR FEDERATION RETREAT

February 27 - March 1, 1987

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Retreat Evaluation Form*

Introduction:

The Fifth Annual Choir Federation Retreat was intended to be a rewarding experience for the mind and the soul. Hopefully, this retreat has been beneficial for you. Through this Retreat Evaluation Form, future retreat organizers will be aided in planning better programs. Your help is solicited.

---Mrs. Anna M. Counelis,
Retreat Chair.

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Directions:

For each program element given below, please circle the number which best reflects your estimate or rating of the program element in terms of the scale given at the right of the line of rating numbers. The number "5" represents the high (and positive) end of each scale. The number "1" represents the low and (and negative) end of each scale.

There are two general purposes for this retreat: (a) to become religiously informed; (b) to be spiritually rewarded. These two goals are used in this evaluation form. They are defined as follows:

(1) To become religiously informed means for the retreatant to have acquired some new knowledge about the Orthodox Church within which he or she lives;

(2) To be spiritually rewarded means for the retreatant to have achieved a positive spiritual experience which caused a change in faith, mind, heart and/or will.

Please keep these definitions in mind when responding to items on this evaluation form.

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*Designed and prepared by Dr. James Steve Counelis, School of Education, The University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California 94117-1080.

1. Retreat Program as a whole:

5	4	3	2	1	Interest: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Effective: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Religiously Informative: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Spiritually Rewarding: Very to Not Very

2. Music Workshop:

5	4	3	2	1	Effective: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Amount of Time: Adequate to Inadequate
5	4	3	2	1	Learning Experience: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Constructive Use of Time: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Enjoyable Use of Time: Very to Not Very

3. First Retreat Theme: Holy Wednesday and Holy Unction--The Healing of Body and Soul.

5.	4	3	2	1	Interest: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness of Learning Format: High to Low

5	4	3	2	1	Quality of Instruction: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Quality of Materials: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Group Participation: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Religiously Informative: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Spiritually Rewarding: Very to Not Very

4. Second Retreat Theme: The Promise of Easter Morn.

5	4	3	2	1	Interest: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness of Learning Format: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Quality of Instruction: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Quality of Materials: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Group Participation: High to Low
5	4	3	2	1	Religiously Informative: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Spiritually Rewarding: Very to Not Very

5. Quiet Time/Meditation:

5	4	3	2	1	Time Allotted: Adequate <u>to</u> Inadequate
5	4	3	2	1	Accessibility of Retreat Master: Very <u>to</u> Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness of Retreat Master: Very <u>to</u> Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Personal Usefulness of Quiet/ Meditation Time: Very <u>to</u> Not Very

6. Saturday Vespers:

5	4	3	2	1	Religiously Informative: Very <u>to</u> Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Spiritually Rewarding: Very <u>to</u> Not Very

7. Sunday Divine Liturgy:

5	4	3	2	1	Religiously Informative: Very <u>to</u> Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Spiritually Rewarding: Very <u>to</u> Not Very

8. Fireside Focus:

5	4	3	2	1	Interest: High <u>to</u> Low
5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness in Setting the Retreat's Tone: Very <u>to</u> Not Very

5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness of Format: Very to Not Very

9. Did you attend the Saturday morning Liturgy of Souls at 7:30 A.M.?

   Check One: _____ Yes _____ No

For the first time, the Choir Federation planned the inclusion of the Youth Choir members in the Music Workshop. The following questionnaire item is about this innovation.

10. Singing with the Youth Choir members in the Music Workshop:

5	4	3	2	1	Appropriateness of Joint Participation with Youth Choir members: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Effectiveness of Youth Choir Participation in the Music Workshop: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Constructive Use of Time Singing with Youth Choir: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Enjoyable Singing Experience: Very to Not Very

RANCH FACILITIES AND SERVICES

1. Sleeping Quarters:

5	4	3	2	1	Cleanliness: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Availability of Linens & Towels Excellent to Poor

2. Bathroom and Toilet Facilities:

5	4	3	2	1	Cleanliness: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Working Order: Excellent to Poor

3. Food and Food Services:

5	4	3	2	1	Food Quality: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Food Preparation: Excellent to Poor
5	4	3	2	1	Food Service: Excellent to Poor

4. Staff:

5	4	3	2	1	Helpfulness: Very to Not Very
5	4	3	2	1	Pleasant Dispositions: Very to Not Very

Please write on the back of this evaluation form your additional comments on the Retreat Program and/or the Ranch facilities. Thank you!

FIFTH ANNUAL CHOIR FEDERATION RETREAT

February 27 - March 1, 1987

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Youth Choir Evaluation Form*

Directions:

Each Youth Choir member is to answer these questions by putting a circle around the word "YES" or "NO."

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1. Did you sing with the adults in the Music Workshop?

   YES NO

2. Did you sing with the adults during Sunday Liturgy?

   YES NO

3. Did you like singing with the adults?

   YES NO

4. Was it fun singing with the adults?

   YES NO

5. Do the words "Kyrie Eleison" mean "Lord love me"?

   YES NO

6. Did you take communion during Sunday Liturgy?

   YES NO

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*In consultation with Ms. Kathy Trapp who planned and directed the Youth Choir Program, this evaluation instrument was designed and prepared by Dr. James Steve Counelis, School of Education, The University of San Francisco, San Francisco, California 94117-1080.

7. Did you say the Lord's Prayer before bedtime?

YES NO

8. Can you hold a note longer now than before you came to the St. Nicholas Ranch?

YES NO

9. Can you read music better now than before you came to St. Nicholas Ranch?

YES NO

10. Did you like playing the game "Musical Trivia"?

YES NO

11. Did you make a high score in the game "Musical Trivia"?

YES NO

12. Did you like the music in "Down by the Creekbank"?

YES NO

13. Did you like the story in "Down by the Creekbank"?

YES NO

14. Did you enjoy performing on stage for the adults?

YES NO

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15. In a sentence or two, write down what you learned from Fr. Gordon?

APPENDIX D:

Sources for Orthodox Christian Books

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Hellenic College/Holy Cross Press,
50 Goddard Avenue,
Brookline, Massachusetts 02146.
Telephone: 617/731-3500.

Light and Life Publishing Company,
3450 Irving Avenue South,
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55408.
Telephone: 612/925-3888.

St. Vladimir's Seminary Press,
Crestwood, New York 10707.
Telephone: 914/961-8313.